



City of Seattle
Human Services Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Sally Clark, Councilmember
CC: John Okamoto, Interim Director
From: Jason Johnson, Division Director
Date: September 5, 2014

Subject: Update on 2014 Investments in Ending Family Homelessness

The Human Services Department is pleased to submit an update regarding the following 2014 investments in ending family homelessness:

- **Diversion Pilot**
HSD Funding: \$240,000
Homeless families are connected with a case manager and one-time financial assistance to strategize a housing solution that will “divert” them from the homeless service system.
- **Rapid Rehousing Pilot**
HSD Funding: \$550,350 (includes approximately \$90,000 in carry-over from 2013).
Homeless families are provided with financial assistance, housing search, move-in assistance, short-term rental assistance, and making a plan to maintain their housing after the program ends.
- **Late Night Expansion**
HSD Funding: Expansion funded with \$450,000 from Green Sheet 83-1-A-1
Overall funding for Late Night Program, including \$450,000 from Green Sheet, is \$796,493
Homeless families are connected with hotel/motel vouchers as well as other essential hygiene and nutritional needs.
- **Bianca’s Place**
Funding: \$200,000 from Green Sheet 83 1 B 1
Homeless families are provided with congregate overnight shelter, including hygiene services and meals.

Below is an overview of some of the key elements of these current investments. For more information, please see the attached overviews for each of these programs.

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Progressive Engagement

The Diversion and Rapid Rehousing pilots and the Late Night Program all use progressive engagement as an effective case management strategy with families. With progressive engagement, after assessing and interviewing families to determine their strengths and the barriers to housing that they face, the smallest amount of assistance needed is offered to stabilize the family, with the understanding that more assistance will be provided if needed.

Progressive engagement, combined with flexible funding, empowers case managers and families to strategize together to come up with solutions, especially in programs like the Diversion pilot. This approach keeps programs focused on each family's unique situation, which results in resources being allocated where they are needed, rather than assigning all families the same amount of assistance.

Flexible Funding

Flexible funding for families is an important part of the Diversion and Rapid Rehousing pilots. Having flexible funding available allows case managers to work with families to develop creative solutions that move them out of homelessness.

Allowing case managers the flexibility to provide the exact type of assistance each family needs is a crucial part of a progressive engagement approach. This could be one-time assistance in many cases (the diversion model), or progress to a rapid rehousing model of multiple yet short-term rental assistance payments.

Flexible funding is also utilized in the Late Night Program. The expanded model allows YWCA staff to engage families immediately and work with them; many are able to be connected with friends and extended family and do not need to enter the homeless services system at all.

Learning Circles

Learning Circles occur monthly for the Diversion and Rapid Rehousing pilots. Participating agencies, funders, Family Homelessness Initiative and Family Housing Connection staff attend. Challenges are discussed, solutions are brainstormed and policy changes are debated. Decision making is done as a team, with the needs of the families rather than the needs of the system at the center of all solutions.

Landlord Outreach and Communication

Ensuring that landlords are clear about the benefits of rapid rehousing is crucial to their willingness to work with case managers and families. HSD staff, along with other regional funders and agencies providing services to homeless families, will be participating in a CEH led landlord outreach event in 2014. The event is intended to increase awareness of both the need for more landlords willing to work with agencies housing homeless families, and the benefits these agencies can provide through rental assistance and support to the families.

Attachment 1: Diversion Pilot

Attachment 2: Rapid Rehousing Pilot

Attachment 3: Late Night Expansion

Attachment 4: Bianca's Place